

STATEMENT OF SENATOR SAM BROWNBCK  
INTRODUCTION OF THE THIRD-GENERATION WIRELESS INTERNET ACT  
NOVEMBER 16, 1999

MR. PRESIDENT, I RISE TODAY TO INTRODUCE THE THIRD-GENERATION WIRELESS INTERNET ACT OF 1999, A BILL TO PREVENT THE FCC FROM APPLYING THE CURRENT SPECTRUM CAP IMPOSED UPON COMMERCIAL MOBILE WIRELESS SERVICES TO NEW SPECTRUM AUCTIONS.

MR. PRESIDENT, THE POPULARITY OF WIRELESS SERVICES HAS FAR EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS. MORE PEOPLE PURCHASE WIRELESS PHONES EVERY MONTH, AND THE DURATION OF CALLS IS GROWING RAPIDLY AS PER-MINUTE RATES DECLINE.

MR. PRESIDENT, WHILE THE POPULARITY OF WIRELESS HAS INCREASED, THE INTERNET HAS BECOME A MASS-MARKET PHENOMENON. FLAT-RATE INTERNET-USAGE PLANS HAVE LURED MILLIONS OF AMERICANS ONLINE. BROADBAND SERVICES HAVE INCREASED THE INTERNET APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE TO CONSUMERS AND DRASTICALLY REDUCED THE AMOUNT OF TIME NECESSARY TO ACCESS INFORMATION ONLINE.

NOW, WE ARE WITNESSING THE MARRIAGE OF THE WIRELESS AND INTERNET CRAZES. WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS PRESENTS CONSUMERS WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS THE INTERNET ANYWHERE AND ANYTIME.

WITH WIRELESS ACCESS, CONSUMERS WILL NO LONGER BE DEPENDENT UPON PERSONAL COMPUTERS TO REACH THE INTERNET. HOWEVER, WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS WILL ONLY BECOME A MASS-MARKET PHENOMENON WHEN CONSUMERS CAN OBTAIN WIRELESS BROADBAND SERVICES THAT PROVIDE THE BANDWIDTH NECESSARY TO DOWNLOAD INFORMATION FROM THE INTERNET ON A HAND-HELD DEVICE AT REASONABLE SPEEDS.

THIRD-GENERATION WIRELESS SERVICES REPRESENT THE FIRST WAVE OF TRULY BROADBAND MOBILE SERVICES. THIRD-GENERATION SERVICES SHOULD ENABLE WIRELESS USERS TO ACHIEVE SPEEDS OF UP TO 384 KILOBITS PER SECOND. BUT, MR. PRESIDENT, TO ENSURE THE RAPID DEPLOYMENT OF THIRD-GENERATION SERVICES, CONGRESS NEEDS TO PROVIDE WIRELESS CARRIERS WITH THE ABILITY TO PURCHASE ADDITIONAL SPECTRUM AT FUTURE FCC AUCTIONS, WHICH MANY CARRIERS CANNOT DO UNDER THE CURRENT FCC POLICY.

MANUFACTURERS ARE HESITANT TO PRODUCE EQUIPMENT FOR THIRD-GENERATION APPLICATIONS, AND WIRELESS CARRIERS ARE UNABLE TO ROLL OUT THIRD-GENERATION SERVICES, BECAUSE WIRELESS CARRIERS DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH SPECTRUM TO OFFER TRUE THIRD-GENERATION SERVICES. CONSUMERS HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE WIRELESS HIGH-SPEED ACCESS TO THE INTERNET. BUT UNTIL THERE IS REGULATORY CERTAINTY THAT CARRIERS WILL BE ABLE TO OBTAIN THE SPECTRUM NECESSARY TO OFFER

THIRD-GENERATION SERVICES, CONSUMERS WILL HAVE TO WAIT BEFORE THEY CAN HAVE A MOBILE ON-RAMP TO THE INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY.

MR. PRESIDENT, I ASK UNANIMOUS CONSENT THAT THE BILL BE PRINTED IN THE RECORD DIRECTLY FOLLOWING MY STATEMENT.